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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT  
FRIDAY, MARCH 23, 2007

#### In Today's Papers

##### Egypt's Mubarak Visits Turkey

All papers report visiting Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak met with Prime Minister Erdogan and Turkish General Staff (TGS) chief Yasar Buyukanit on Thursday. Mubarak, at a joint press conference with President Sezer at the end of their talks yesterday, said ties between Turkey and Egypt have reached a new dimension after signing of a free trade agreement. Sezer described Egypt as a key partner and a friend of Turkey. Sezer pointed to the problems in the Middle East, saying they reflected a general mood of desperation. Sezer reportedly asked Mubarak in their meeting to suspend a controversial agreement with the Greek Cypriots for oil exploration in eastern Mediterranean. Mubarak, declining to make a clear response to Sezer, said Turkey and Egypt should intensify consultations to resolve the disagreement. Mubarak is expected to depart Ankara Friday afternoon after meeting with Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul.

##### Investigation into Police Negligence in Hrant Dink Murder

Hurriyet, Milliyet, Vatan, and others: Investigating possible negligence in Hrant Dink's murder, Interior Ministry inspectors claimed that the Istanbul police Department didn't do enough to prevent the assassination of journalist Hrant Dink and demanded Istanbul Police Chief Celalettin Cerrah be tried for negligence. The Inspectors' report also said that the Intelligence Department chief Ahmet Ilhan Guler should stand trial for breach of duty. The report highlighted that although the Trabzon Police department sent information regarding a possible assassination of Dink to them, the Istanbul Police department failed to take measures to prevent it.

##### Arinc Letter to Pelosi on the Armenian Resolution; Opening of Akdamar Church

Milliyet, Zaman, Sabah, Hurriyet, and others: Parliament Speaker Arinc sent a letter to Speaker of US House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi and requested her to prevent the passage of the Armenian genocide resolution. In his letter Arinc highlighted the strong

alliance and friendship between Turkey and the US and noted that the passage of the resolution would deeply hurt US-Turkey relations, as well as Turkish-Armenian relations.

Meanwhile, talking to Anatolia News Agency (AA), Armenian Patriarch Mesrob II said that an Armenian resolution by the US Congress would not bring any benefit and would have a negative impact on the dialogue between Turkey and Armenia. The Patriarch also said that the name of the church on Akdamar Island in Van is not Akdamar Church, but "Surp (Sacred) Cross Armenian Church." He had suggested to the government that cross ceremonies should be held at that church every year, however, he has not gotten any response yet. Milliyet reports that Armenian Foreign Minister Oskanian said that they have received an invitation from Turkey for the ceremony of the opening of the restored church but the fact that the border between Turkey and Armenia is closed would cause them major difficulty in traveling there. He added that "it takes only four hours to get from Yerevan to Van and if Turkey wants to make a gesture, it should open the border."

#### Kurdish Leaders Face Probe over Nevruz Remarks

All papers report the office of the prosecutor in Diyarbakir has initiated legal action against Kurdish party DTP leader Ahmet Turk and former Kurdish lawmaker and activist Leyla Zana for their speeches made during Nevruz celebrations. Turk had called the PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan "Mr." whereas Zana cited Iraqi President Jalal Talabani, northern Iraqi administration president Massoud Barzani and Ocalan as "the three leaders of the Kurdish people." Turk and Zana will be tried under Article 215 of the Turkish Penal Code for "praising a crime and a criminal."

#### Editorial Commentary on Palestine, Iraq

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Abdulhamit Bilici writes in the intellectual Islamist-oriented daily Zaman: "Israel not only pressured for an embargo against Palestine but also put the legitimate representatives of the Palestinian administration and parliamentarians in prison. Every country in the region considers the West's treatment of Palestinian politics as an indication of the clear double standard. The never-ending democracy rhetoric contradicts the fact that some of the elected Palestinian deputies are imprisoned. Had the efforts intensified toward encouraging Hamas' participation in the democratic process, the situation could be different and better. Instead, Hamas was given discouraging signals regarding democratization. The fact that Hamas agreed to share the government with Fatah, even though it didn't have to, was not enough to end the embargo against Palestine. Advocating flexibility is more important than ever in the Middle East. Hamas presents its flexibility and gets a tough stance in return, which shows that Israel is the uncompromising side in this dispute."

Adnan Bostancioglu observes in the leftist daily Birgun: "After four years of occupation, everybody points to the severe problems of instability, poverty and other issues in Iraq. Can we possibly believe that Iraq is heading toward a period where the insurgency will diminish, sectarian clashes will be replaced by the national consensus and Iraq will end up being a state of laws, as the US official statements claim? The reality says just the opposite. The insurgency is growing even more than ever before and security cannot be established across the country despite the presence of 140,000 occupation forces. Al Qaeda which was not significant in Iraq before the occupation has now become the strongest organization. Given the situation, it remains a daydream to hope that the US will be successful by adding 20,000 troops. Just like ensuring stability, democracy is an illusion in the desert. Ending the occupation is certainly a good thing for the future of Iraq. This was the common message during the world-wide protests against the occupation of Iraq. However, the end of the occupation does not necessarily mean the settlement of every issue that Iraq has been suffering. We must pursue an end for the occupation, but at the same time we cannot hope for something optimistic after that either."

TV Highlights  
NTV (6 a.m.)

## Domestic News

- Prominent Turkish philanthropist and businessman Kadir Has died of a heart attack at the age of 86. Has had established a university in Istanbul, and was widely admired for donating USD 600 million to education and health causes.
- UN inspectors probing the murder of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri have met in Istanbul with the Turkish prosecutors investigating al-Qaeda member Louai Sakka.
- Deputy Prime Minister Abdullatif Sener said Turkey should review its customs union agreement with the EU. "Turkey cannot compete with countries such as Germany and Britain where Common Custom Tariffs are implemented," Sener stressed, elaborating that EU commodities are brought into Turkey through low customs taxes while Turkish goods are exported with higher rates.
- Parliament Speaker Bulent Arinc will be in Italy on Friday to join ceremonies held to mark the 50th anniversary of the Rome Treaty.

## International News

- Turkish Cyprus is to apply to the UN after hearing reports claiming Greek Cyprus has hired 1000 mercenaries from Greece.
- James Holmes, the head of the American-Turkish Council, said the

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US Congress was likely to reject the Armenian genocide resolution.

- A French court ruled in favor of humor weekly Charlie Hebdo that had printed cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad, rejecting accusations by Islamic groups claiming the publication incited hatred against Muslims.
- The Dutch Parliament has urged Turkey to exempt Turkish Dutch nationals living in the Netherlands of compulsory military service in Turkey.

<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/ankara/>

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